

SOUTHERN HUNGARY IN PROCESS OF RECONSTRUCTION

BY

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In the restored parts of Upper Hungary, with the return of Hungarian rule prosperity and work have come again to that sorely tried region. It is now about a year and a half since the Hungarian Government and the people began this work of reconstruction, and its results are visible everywhere. *A year and a half was sufficient to forge organic links between a region that had suffered much under alien rule and the mother-country.* Today it is practically impossible to find any difference between the restored area and the other parts of the country. The fundamental work was accomplished during the first year, when the shortcomings of the past two decades were made good. Now the same constructive work is being done in Southern Hungary as in the mother-country. Our object in giving an account of what has been accomplished there during the past few months is merely to draw attention to the strenuous work undertaken in every part of the restored areas by a Hungary at war.

Seeing that Southern Hungary is mainly an agricultural area, we shall first describe what is being done to improve agriculture. In the past months the distribution of land to the peasantry continued. At *Óbecse* 1200 families received land and at *Szabadka* viticulture has been organized so that the owners of small vineyards will receive the required raw materials and sell their wine in an organized manner. The *General Mortgage Bank* is doing its full share of the work of assisting farmers. Its *Ujvidék* branch has begun to issue loans to enable the farmers to modernize their equipment and rationalize production. In Southern Hungary the Government has introduced the system of model farm districts that work so well in the mother-country. The first of these in Southern

Hungary has been established at *Topolya*, where with the assistance of the Government the production of crops of a better quality has begun as an example to the whole region. Much attention is also being devoted to the industrial manufacture of agricultural products. At *Kishegyes* 100.000 pengő have been spent in setting up an oil factory which will be able to deal with almost all the oil-producing seed grown in Southern Hungary. The sugar refinery at *Verbász* will take over all the sugar-beet grown in the restored area. Since this sugar refinery returned to Hungary it is being constantly enlarged and modernized. Last month this factory established an important social institution, a day nursery for the children of the hands, and also completed the building of a recreation ground for the workers.

Throughout the area of restored Southern Hungary the task of lending a helping hand to unfortunates is in progress. In almost every town and larger village houses are being built for poor people with large families by the General Family Protection Foundation. In *Zombor* 20, at *Topolya* 12, at *Óbecse* 8, in *Szabadka* 10 such houses are in process of construction, and in almost every village the Foundation has either finished or begun the building of such family houses.

Besides building family houses the Government is spending large sums on road repairs. New roads are being built between *Szabadka* and *Topolya*, *Szenttamás* and *Zombor*, and *Topolya* and *Zenta*, and the roads between *Szabadka* and *Zombor* and *Ujvidék* and *Bácsfeketehegy* are being repaired. Roads are of major importance in these agricultural areas, and special attention is being devoted to them by the Government. Unfortunately the difficulties are very great, partly because the roads in Southern Hungary were so sadly neglected during the past two decades that their repair is very costly, and partly because the lack of raw materials caused by the war is a great impediment to the Government's work.

In the field of social work an event of great importance is the modernization of the hospital at *Szabadka*. Last month the work of enlarging it was begun, for which purpose the Government has contributed 400.000 pengő. Mention must also be made of the valuable volunteer work being done by

female university students among *the Szeklers who were repatriated from Bukovina*. Sparing no effort these young women hasten to be of assistance to the settlers in their new surroundings — a further proof of the sympathy and goodwill felt for them by the Hungarian people.

In the sphere of education mention must be made of the *Piarist secondary school* to be opened this year at *Szabadka*, where also courses of training for infant school teachers from every part of the restored area are being held. In *Ujvidék* a commercial school has been opened which may well prove to be the most important in the country. At *Óbecse*, *Kishegyes* and *Verbász* agricultural libraries have been established in order to educate the people of those districts.

Another event worthy of mention was the return from Bosnia last month of a third group of Magyars numbering 1000. These Magyars returning from a foreign country will certainly be inspired with added confidence in the mother-country when they see that life here is better than in any other part of Europe and that constructive work is constantly in progress.

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